

HAWAII STATE CAPITOL
415 S. BERETANIA
ROOM 208
HONOLULU, HI
96813

PHONE: 808-586-6030
FAX: 808-586-6031
TOLL FREE FROM KAUAI:
274-3141, EXT. 66030#
CELL DIRECT: 652-4279

E-MAIL: SENHOOSER@
CAPITOL.HAWAII.GOV

VISIT SENATOR HOOSER
ONLINE AT
www.capitol.hawaii.gov

*Mahalo to the people
of Kaua'i and
Ni'ihau for allowing
me the honor and
privilege of serving
as Your Senator.
As always, please
do not hesitate to
call me at any time
to share your
concerns, discuss
ideas, or just
talk story.*



Report from Senator Gary L. Hooser

7th District, Kaua'i-Ni'ihau

Twenty Second Legislative Session

Spring, 2004

Aloha Friends,
History will show that the 2004 Legislative Session was one of the most productive ever. Significant legislation was passed to improve public education and deal effectively with the ICE epidemic and other significant issues.

Education: As Vice Chair of the Senate Education Committee, I co-sponsored SB3238 that reinvents the management of public education in our state.

Drug Abuse & ICE: The 2004 Legislature passed drug abuse measures that balance effectively the requirements of law enforcement and health/treatment needs.

Budget: Serving on the Senate Ways and Means Committee allowed me to work with Rep. Ezra Kanohe and Rep. Mina Morita, together with Vice Chair of Finance Rep. Bertha Kawakami to secure the funding necessary for numerous community priorities.

Other initiatives that also passed include:

Public Access—SB3044 making it a criminal act to obstruct public access to shoreline and interior public lands.

Agriculture—Funding for the East Kaua'i Water Co-op and the Kaua'i Fruit Fly Disinfestation Facility. Passage of ethanol initiatives in support of Kaua'i sugar plantations.

Business—Passed ethanol incentive package, lowered certain fees paid by business, and passed tax credits for emerging technology sectors.

Highway Improvements-

- Over \$2.5 million released to begin construction on Kapa'a Bypass extension.
- Pouli Road "connector" design work was funded in 2003—work is pending.
- County and State DOT are now working in partnership with landowners to establish an emergency by-pass route in the Wailua golf course corridor.
- Final recommendation on the "permanent Kapa'a Bypass" is expected soon, setting stage to secure planning and design funds.
- Funding obtained for improvements along Kaumuali'i Highway to improve traffic flow in the Lihu'e to Puhi corridor.

Affordable Housing-

- Hosted the Kaua'i Housing Summit, forwarded recommendations on permitting processes to County.
- Served as conduit between Kaua'i developers and State agencies to accelerate affordable development.
- Secured funding for County sewer infrastructure projects for Lihu'e and Waimea.
- Introduced measures to increase funding for affordable housing and infrastructure.
- Sponsored SCR 135, requiring statewide task force to recommend legislation in 2005 to increase affordable housing.



Sen. Gary L. Hooser

Goals for the Future

Education—Increase funding for schools, expand technology and vocational training, continue to lower class size, and monitor/support weighted funding implementation.

Drug Abuse—Maintain focus on supporting the elimination of ICE abuse.

Traffic—Secure funding of Kapaa Bypass planning and design and Kaumuali'i Highway rights of way purchase and construction. Increase funding for expanded public transportation alternatives.

Housing—Make the creation of new affordable housing the #1 priority in the state. Create tax incentives for affordable housing development, provide significant investment in new infrastructure construction.

State Budget Showers The Garden Island

The State's 2004-2005 Budget provides funding for many important Kaua'i projects. The information below represents a summary list only, primarily focusing on CIP projects.

- \$560,000 to support an adolescent residential drug treatment center.
- \$10,000,000 - Kaua'i Community College's "One Stop Center."
- \$350,000 - Air conditioning of Kaua'i Performing Arts Center.
- \$475,000 - Design new Kaua'i Community Corrections Center.
- \$850,000 - Sewer improvements in Lihu'e and Waimea.
- \$1,651,000 - Expand Hanapepe Public Library.
- \$338,000 - Renovations at Samuel Mahelona Memorial Hospital.
- \$250,000 - Design new library at Kapa'a Elementary School.
- \$2,100,000 - First phase construction funding for Kilauea Elementary School Cafeteria.
- \$150,000 - Facility improvements at Kaua'i Tropical Fruit Disinfestation Facility.
- Funding for community health centers and support of dental health for Friendship House residents.
- Funding for East Kaua'i Water Co-op system.
- Funding for Hawaii Rx Program to provide prescription drug coverage benefits.

- Restoration of statewide funding for HHSC, including Kaua'i Veterans Memorial Hospital and Mahelona Hospital.
- Funding for a variety of island-wide highway improvement projects.
- Matching funds for Nawiliwili Harbor channel modification.

Included in 2003/2004 budget:

- Design and construct re-roofing projects at Kaua'i Veterans Memorial Hospital.
- \$1.45 million for improvements at intersections and highways.
- Money for improvements along Kuhio Highway, Waimea Canyon Drive, and Koke'e Road.
- Funding for Waimea High School locker room facility.
- Funds for the rehabilitation of 'Omao Bridge and replacement of Kapaia Bridge.
- Design and construction of rubberized track at Antone "Kona" Vidinha Stadium.
- \$11.5 million for improvements at Lihu'e Airport Heliport and baggage claim areas.
- \$2.5 million in a previous budget was released in 2004 for the extension of the temporary Kapa'a Bypass.



Dr. Richard Wayne Fukino, Emergency Room physician at Kaua'i Veterans Memorial Hospital, testifies before members of the Senate Ways and Means Committee. Shown are Senators Fred Hemmings, Melodie Aduja, Gary Hooser, Brian Kanno, and Lorraine Inouye. Dr. Fukino and many other island residents called for restoration of funding for the Hawaii Health Systems Corporation, which operates Kaua'i Veterans Memorial Hospital and Samuel Mahelona Medical Center.

Drug Bills Pass; Focus on Prevention, Treatment of ICE Abuse

Two measures have been enacted into law addressing the ICE crystal methamphetamine epidemic that plagues our state and our community. More than 6,000 ICE users in Hawai'i currently require treatment for abuse of this substance, but until now, fewer than half have been able to find publicly funded programs. Studies also show a clear and direct correlation between ICE addiction and increased levels of crime. The legislation passed deals strongly with both areas of concern.

Enforcement and Prevention

- Establishes new penalties for manufacture or distribution of ICE, crystal methamphetamine.
- Protects children from the dangers of clandestine ICE labs and ICE houses.
- Clarifies that parole violators and ICE traffickers are not eligible and that only first-time offenders are eligible for diversion to substance abuse programs.
- Increases penalties for use of minors to promote drugs in or near schools or parks.
- Increased penalty and felony classification for "habitual property crimes."



In order to successfully battle the continuing use and abuse of crystal methamphetamine, the Legislature this year passed into law several important pieces of legislation which attempt to achieve a balance. These new laws strongly support community based law enforcement with regard to substance abuse. At the same time, they give due consideration to health issues and the need for treatment programs for drug abuse in general and ICE abuse in particular.

Education and Treatment

- Provides funding of \$4 million for adult treatment services.
- \$3 million for school-based substance abuse treatment programs.
- \$4.7 million to expand Drug Court services and expand general substance abuse prevention programs.
- Provides \$560,000 in funding for State/County partnership to establish a Kaua'i adolescent residential drug treatment facility.
- Provides parity in health insurance benefits for substance abuse.



Sen. Hooser and colleagues on the Senate Ways & Means Committee and Kaua'i Representatives Bertha Kawakami and Mina Morita and other members of the House Finance Committee made a site visit to the existing Kilauea School cafeteria in the process of funding construction of a new, expanded cafeteria. The legislators enjoyed meeting with students who were rallying to fight ICE abuse.

Reinventing Our Public Education System

by Senator Gary L. Hooser

During the past nineteen months, as Vice Chair of the Senate Education Committee, I have participated in many meetings and hearings focusing on vital education reform. In committee and privately, I've spoken with and listened intently to the ideas put forth by teachers, principals, parents, students, business leaders and an array of experts representing a wide spectrum of viewpoints.

As a co-sponsor of the Senate Education Omnibus Package passed by the 2004 legislature, I can say with confidence that this important initiative will have a direct and immediate impact on improving public education in our state. The key components of the legislation include:

- A weighted funding formula allocating money directly to schools.
- A Hawaii Principals' Academy providing continuing professional development and support, and rewarding exceptional performance.
- Empowered School Community Councils with meaningful involvement in the school budget and policy development process.
- A \$5000 annual bonus for teachers earning National Certification.
- Reduced bureaucracy and de-linking of duplicative state departments.
- Smaller class sizes in the critical primary grades K, 1, and 2.

While these key components of the legislative education initiative received broad-based community support, the same could not be said of the proposal to dismantle the statewide Board of Education in favor of locally elected school boards. The Hawaii Business Roundtable, representatives of teachers and principals, the Board of Education, and the DOE all stated clearly their opposition to the proposal. Hawaii's

PTSA members and the Hawaii State Student Council chose not to endorse the initiative. Surveys of residents clearly showed that school boards were a low priority to Kaua'i citizens, who preferred increased spending on schools, smaller class size, and increased teacher pay as more urgent strategies needed to improve our public schools.

Those opposed to the multiple school board proposal expressed four main areas of concern:

- The plan was not supported by sound research and had not been shown to have a direct impact on improving student academic performance.
- The governor's actual proposal called for an appointed statewide commission to exercise control over the proposed district school boards.
- The proposal created additional bureaucracies, each of which had a separate administrative structure duplicating the services of the current Department of Education.
- The creation of separate school boards would have meant that each would be contending separately for limited state resources. Small neighbor-island districts, like Kaua'i, would have been the obvious losers when competing with wealthy Honolulu districts three to ten times larger.

I believe that the people are best served when public policy decisions are based on facts and open debate of the issues.

The education reform legislation passed by the Legislature represents systemic change of significant substance and value. By working together in partnership with all stakeholders, we can now move forward and fulfill our community's commitment to making our schools the best they can be.



Senate Education Committee
Vice Chair Senator Hooser and
Committee Chair Senator
Norman Sakamoto

***“Bureaucracy will
be cut and class
sizes in the critical
primary grades will
be reduced”***

